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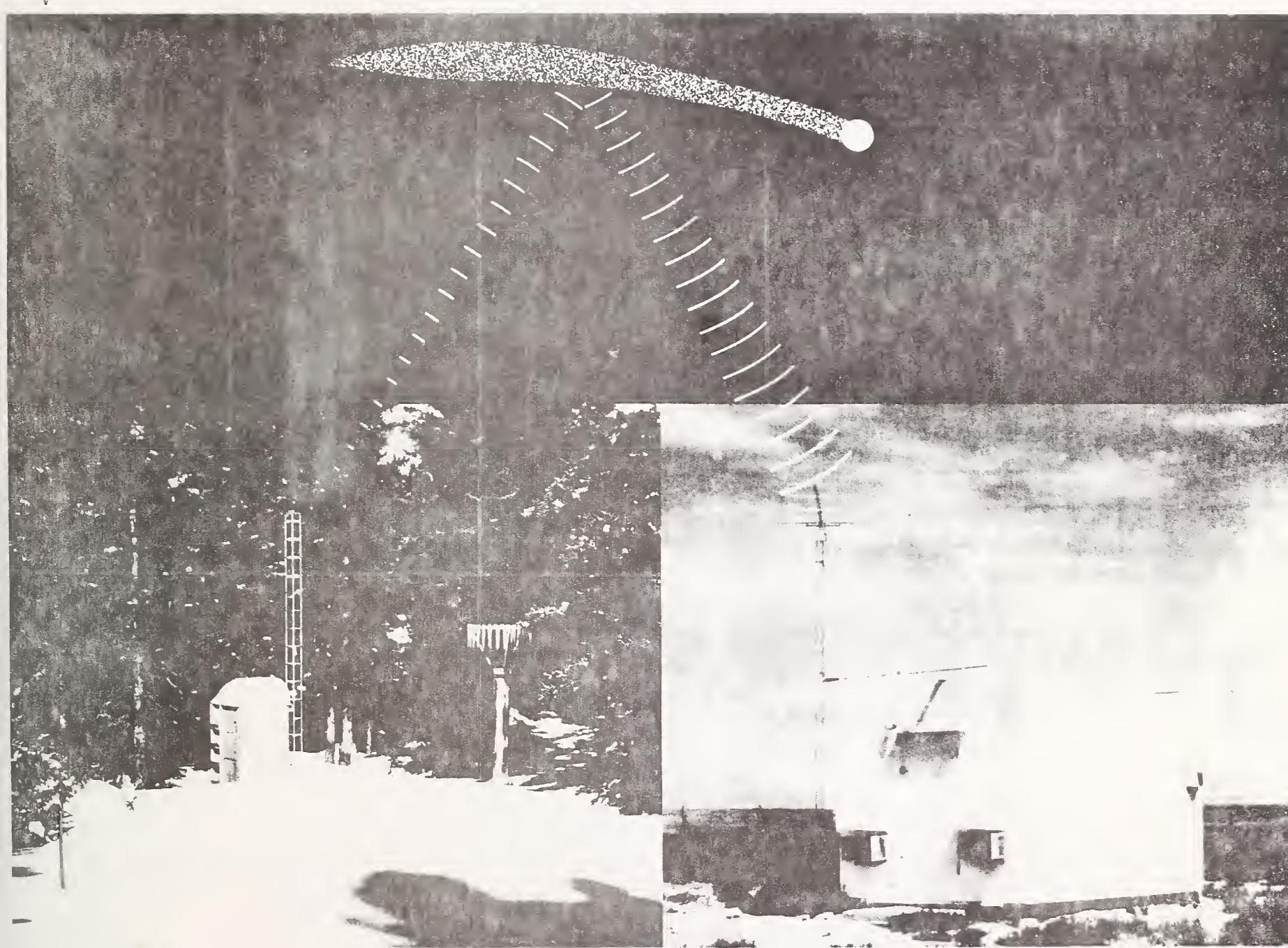
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WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK FOR MONTANA



U. S. DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE ★ SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

Collaborating with

MONTANA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

OCTOBER 1, 1978

Data included in this report were obtained by the agencies named above in cooperation with Federal, State and private organizations listed inside the back cover of this report.

TO RECIPIENTS OF WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK REPORTS:

Most of the usable water in western states originates as mountain snowfall. This snowfall accumulates during the winter and spring, several months before the snow melts and appears as streamflow. Since the runoff from precipitation as snow is delayed, estimates of snowmelt runoff can be made well in advance of its occurrence. Streamflow forecasts published in this report are based principally on measurement of the water equivalent of the mountain snowpack.

Forecasts become more accurate as more of the data affecting runoff are measured. All forecasts assume that climatic factors during the remainder of the snow accumulation and melt season will interact with a resultant average effect on runoff. Early season forecasts are therefore subject to a greater change than those made on later dates.

The snow course measurement is obtained by sampling snow depth and water equivalent at surveyed and marked locations in mountain areas. A total of about ten samples are taken at each location. The average of these are reported as snow depth and water equivalent. These measurements are repeated in the same location near the same dates each year.

Snow surveys are made monthly or semi-monthly from January 1 through June 1 in most states. There are about 1900 snow courses in Western United States and in the Columbia Basin in British Columbia. Networks of automatic snow water equivalent and related data sensing devices, along with radio telemetry are expanding and will provide a continuous record of snow water and other parameters at key locations.

Detailed data on snow course and soil moisture measurements are presented in state and local reports. Other data on reservoir storage, summaries of precipitation, current streamflow, and soil moisture conditions at valley elevations are also included. The report for Western United States presents a broad picture of water supply outlook conditions, including selected streamflow forecasts, summary of snow accumulation to date, and storage in larger reservoirs.

Snow survey and soil moisture data for the period of record are published by the Soil Conservation Service by states about every five years. Data for the current year is summarized in a West-wide basic data summary and published about October 1 of each year.

COVER PHOTO: SOME OF THE DATA IN THIS REPORT HAVE BEEN RECEIVED THROUGH THE SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE'S NEW SNOTEL SYSTEM WHICH TRANSMITS INFORMATION VIA THE SPACE AGED METEOR BURST METHOD FROM DATA SITES TO MASTER STATIONS LIKE THESE.

PUBLISHED BY SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

The Soil Conservation Service publishes reports following the principal snow survey dates from January 1 through June 1 in cooperation with state water administrators, agricultural experiment stations and others. Copies of the reports for Western United States and all state reports may be obtained from Soil Conservation Service, West Technical Service Center, Room 510, 511 N.W. Broadway, Portland, Oregon 97209.

Copies of state and local reports may also be obtained from state offices of the Soil Conservation Service in the following states:

STATE	ADDRESS
Alaska	Room 129, 2221 East Northern Lights Blvd., Anchorage, Alaska 99504
Arizona	Room 3008, Federal Building, Phoenix, Arizona 85025
Colorado (N. Mex.)	P. O. Box 17107, Denver, Colorado 80217
Idaho	Room 345, 304 N. 8th. St., Boise, Idaho 83702
Montana	P. O. Box 98, Bozeman, Montana 59715
Nevada	P. O. Box 4850, Reno Nevada 89505
Oregon	1220 S.W. Third Ave., Portland, Oregon 97204
Utah	4012 Federal Bldg., 125 South State St., Salt Lake City, Utah 84138
Washington	360 U.S. Court House, Spokane, Washington 99201
Wyoming	P. O. Box 2440, Casper, Wyoming 82602

PUBLISHED BY OTHER AGENCIES

Water Supply Outlook reports prepared by other agencies include a report for California by the Water Supply Forecast and Snow Surveys Unit, California Department of Water Resources, P.O. Box 388, Sacramento, California 95802 --- for British Columbia by the Ministry of the Environment, Water Investigations Branch, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X5 --- for Yukon Territory by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Northern Operations Branch, 200 Range Road, Whitehorse, Yukon Territory Y1A 3V1 --- and for Alberta, Saskatchewan, and N.W.T. by the Water Survey of Canada, Inland Waters Branch, 110-12 Avenue S.W., Calgary, Alberta T3C 1A6.



WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK FOR MONTANA

and
FEDERAL - STATE - PRIVATE COOPERATIVE SNOW SURVEYS

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NOTICE

THE FORMAT FOR THE MONTANA WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK
CHANGED THIS PAST WINTER. THE NEWSPAPER-STYLE
REPORT HAS REPLACED THE BOOK-STYLE REPORT.

SIMPLY STATED, THE NEWSPAPER REPORT COSTS LESS FOR PRINTING, CAN BE PRINTED AND DISTRIBUTED IN A SHORTER TIME, AND IS EASIER TO PREPARE.

THE MAIN OBJECTION TO THIS STYLE REPORT APPEARS TO BE THE PROBLEM OF FILING THESE REPORTS FOR FUTURE REFERENCE. TO HELP THOSE WHO KEEP BASIC SNOW DATA WE PLAN TO PREPARE A BASIC DATA SUMMARY. CONTENT WILL BE CONFINED TO BASIC DATA ON SNOW COURSES, SNOW PILLOWS AND RELATED MEASUREMENTS.

THE 1978 BASIC DATA SUMMARY IS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING PREPARED AND WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL LATER. ANYONE NEEDING THIS DATA PRIOR TO RECEIPT OF THE PUBLICATION SHOULD IDENTIFY THEIR SPECIFIC NEED TO THE SNOW SURVEY UNIT, P. O. BOX 98, BOZEMAN, MONTANA 59715.

THANK YOU FOR BEARING WITH US DURING THESE
PRINTING CHANGES.

WATER SUPPLY CONDITIONS
April through September 1978

Most headwater areas started the spring season with near average snowpack in higher elevations and below average snow in the lower elevations. Spring temperatures warmed gradually and most streams carried snowmelt runoff with little channel overflow. Heavy rain in south-central and southeastern Montana and northeastern Wyoming did cause extensive flooding, primarily in the Tongue, Powder, and Big Horn River drainages.

Streamflow in most streams held up well through the summer irrigation period.

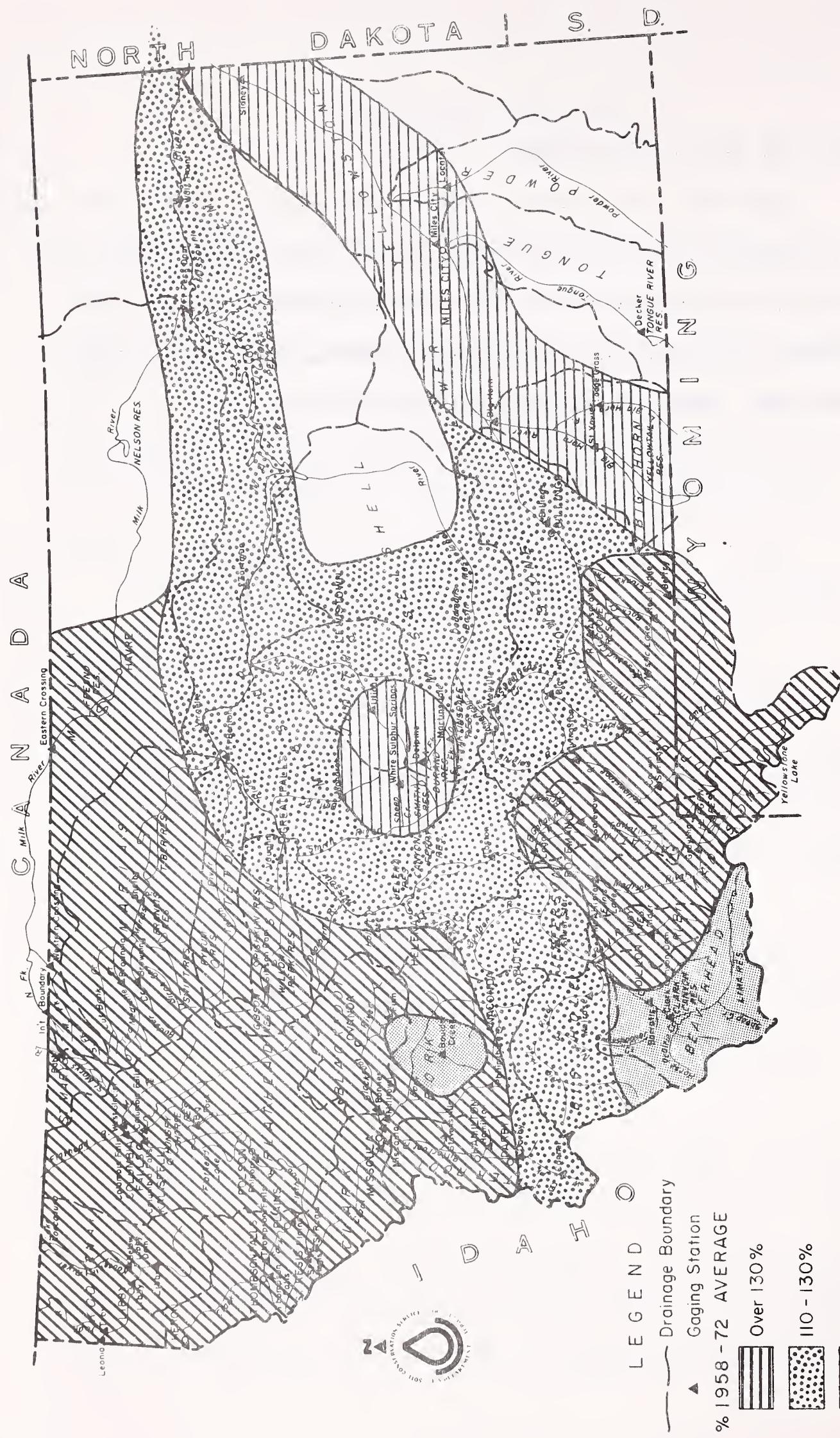
Most areas west of the divide had April through September streamflow in the range of 90 to 100 percent of average. A small portion of the Bitterroot and Upper Clark Fork headwaters had above average runoff. The Philipsburg-Anaconda-Drummond area had some streams with below average runoff.

East of the divide, the Beaverhead River showed below average runoff. Most other drainages in the Missouri headwaters showed average or above average runoff. Above average flows were recorded from streams in central Montana.

The Yellowstone River basin showed above average streamflow for almost all drainages. Most headwater streams above Billings had 5 to 25 percent more runoff than average. The Big Horn River below Yellowtail Dam and smaller drainages flowing into the Big Horn and Yellowstone River below the Big Horn had runoff greater

than 140 percent of average.

Heavy Fall moisture has occurred over various areas of the state with snowfalls of one to two feet common in the southern mountains. Current warm weather has melted most new snowfall and only the highest elevations show any remaining snow accumulation. These rains and snowmelt have added moisture to the soil.



MONTANA

PROSPECTIVE STREAMFLOW FORECASTS AS OF

50 0 50 100
SCALE IN MILES

1978 SNOW COVER COMPARISONS - PERCENT AVERAGE

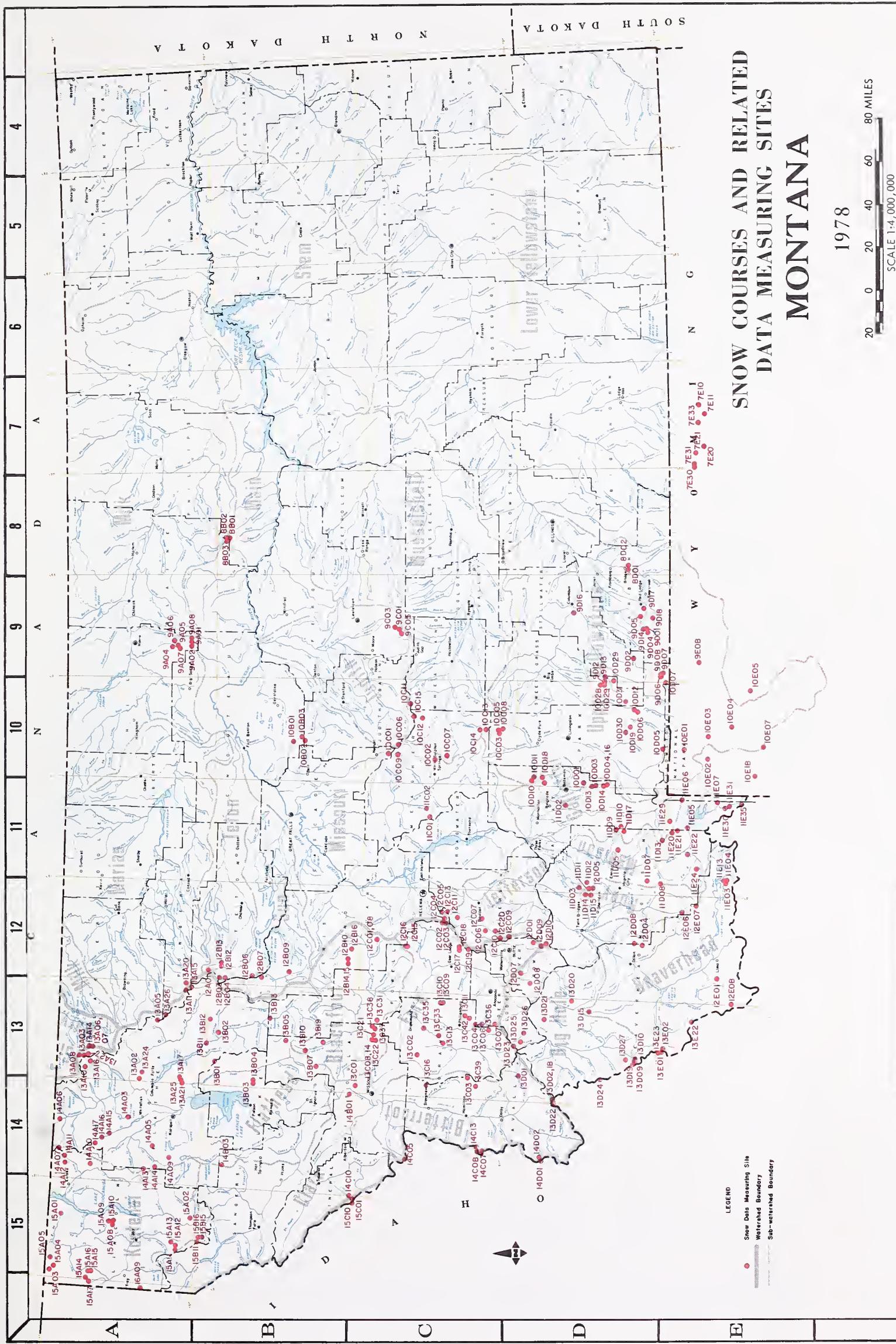
1958-1972 Averages

<u>Drainage</u>	<u>Jan. 1</u>	<u>Feb. 1</u>	<u>Mar. 1</u>	<u>Apr. 1</u>	<u>May 1</u>
Kootenai	128	94	92	77	82
Flathead	131	105	104	92	91
Upper Clark Fork	153	122	108	91	83
Lower Clark Fork	144	108	99	85	82
Bitterroot	192	134	120	103	98
Jefferson	139	112	122	107	103
Madison	129	120	128	108	104
Gallatin	131	121	124	107	100
Missouri Main-Stem	156	131	125	112	102
Judith-Musselshell	167	134	141	121	100
Marias-Teton-Sun	121	106	105	87	84
Milk	165	133	127	105	72
Yellowstone (ab Big Horn)	153	127	128	111	101
Little Big Horn	-	127	129	102	105
St. Mary's	114	103	93	71	67

RESERVOIR STORAGE (Thousand Acre Feet) END OF MONTH

September

Basin or Stream	RESERVOIR	Usable Capacity	Usable Storage		
			This Year	Last Year	Average
<u>COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN</u>					
Kootenai	Koocanusa	5,694.0	5,530.0	3,733.0	-
Flathead	Hungry Horse	3,428.0	3,440.0	2,366.0	3,293.0
	Flathead Lake	1,791.0	1,712.0	1,728.0	1,738.0
	Camas (4)	45.2	16.7	3.2	21.4
	Mission Valley (8)	100.3	66.6	26.7	22.7
Clark Fork	Georgetown Lake	31.0	30.7	27.7	28.4
	Lower Willow Creek	4.9	.8	.1	1.2
	Nevada Creek	12.8	-	-	4.8
	Noxon Rapids	334.6	327.5	315.3	323.7
Bitterroot	Como	34.9	6.1	.8	1.7
	Painted Rocks	31.7	27.3	18.6	26.5
<u>MISSOURI RIVER BASIN</u>					
Beaverhead	Clark Canyon	257.2	137.7	114.9	125.6
	Lima	84.0	-	33.2	27.1
Ruby	Ruby	38.8	13.2	-	10.8
Madison	Hebgen Lake	377.5	339.7	333.2	315.9
	Ennis Lake	41.0	38.1	38.8	35.4
Gallatin	Middle Creek	8.0	4.2	2.9	2.9
Missouri	Canyon Ferry	2,043.0	1,472.0	1,786.0	1,742.0
	Hauser & Helena	61.9	61.9	60.7	58.7
	Lake Helena	10.4	10.5	10.0	10.3
	Holter Lake	81.9	80.3	80.5	75.4
	Fort Peck Lake	18,910.0	18,420.0	14,980.0	14,550.0
Smith	Smith River	10.6	-	6.6	4.8
	Newlan Creek	12.4	11.6	3.1	-
Musselshell	Bair	7.0	-	3.0	3.0
	Martinsdale	23.1	-	10.4	7.8
	Deadman's Basin	72.2	-	15.1	32.5
Sun	Gibson	99.0	49.1	2.2	31.0
	Willow Creek	32.2	25.7	11.9	17.1
	Pishkun	32.0	19.8	16.8	16.1
Marias	Lower Two Medicine	11.9	11.8	-	-
	Four Horns	19.2	13.1	-	-
	Swift	30.0	12.0	1.4	13.1
Milk	Lake Frances	111.9	94.0	29.8	78.1
	Elwell (Tiber)	1,347.0	629.3	532.5	642.0
	Beaver Creek	3.5	2.1	1.6	-
	Fresno	127.2	85.7	23.4	66.1
	Nelson	66.8	49.8	6.5	43.1
	Lake Sherburne	66.2	16.7	12.5	6.1
Yellowstone	Mystic Lake	21.0	19.9	17.9	20.1
	Cooney	27.4	14.6	3.5	12.1
	Tongue River	68.0	20.1	20.1	24.1
	Big Horn Lake	1,356.0	1,042.0	931.1	977.1



Agencies and Organizations Cooperating in Montana Snow Surveys

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Canada:

Water Survey of Canada, Calgary, Department of the Environment
Water Resources Service, Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, British Columbia
Alberta Environment, Edmonton, Alberta

Federal:

Department of the Army
Corps of Engineers
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Soil Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Commerce
NOAA, National Weather Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bonneville Power Administration
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Reclamation
Fish and Wildlife Service
Geological Survey
National Park Service

STATE

Montana Conservation Districts
Montana Department of Fish and Game
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Montana State University - Agricultural Experiment Station
University of Montana - School of Forestry
DNRC - State Forester

PRIVATE

Montana Power Company
Butte Water Company
The Anaconda Company

Other organizations and individuals furnish valuable information for snow survey reports. Their cooperation is gratefully acknowledged.



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